

The Way That (You) Move by jockwitch

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Summary:

Eddie Kaspbrak is nineteen, an ex-nationally ranked figure skater, and the newest employee at Derry Ice Center.

Richie Tozier is nineteen, can moonwalk in hockey skates, and is in charge of training Eddie.

In between holiday shifts, an ice show, and the disappearance of the Worst Elf Costume of All Time, they fall in love.

1. The Fever's Gonna Catch You

Author's Note:

Ending 2019 with the most self-indulgent thing I could come up with.

Thanks to Dana, Marina, and Megan for entertaining me with my ideas, and Megan especially for the invaluable story advice! This couldn't have happened without you.

DISCLAIMER: I've worked at rinks for several years but I'm not a figure skater, so if I make a grievous error

re: figure skating, I'm sorry!

Both titles are from *The Bitch is Back* by Elton John, because Eddie Kaspbrak is in fact, that bitch.

For most of his life, Eddie's favorite place in the world was the ice rink. One of his earliest memories is of him and his dad on the ice sometime after his fourth birthday. His father skating around the ice with ease and Eddie, determined to do it on his own, stumbling behind with his clothes soaked from falling over and over again.

From that day on, Eddie spent as much time on the ice as he did off.

He had promise, and while his mother was fearful over her precious Eddie injuring himself or pushing himself too hard, the coaches who would tell her things like "Great potential" and "Nationals hopeful" and "International success" were too compelling to pull Eddie out of the sport. So he was allowed to stay. At age eight, they packed up and left Derry, Maine to move down the coast to Boston with better coaches and a better rink. Sonia Kaspbrak poured *everything* into Eddie's skating career.

And then when Eddie was seventeen, he got injured.

He wasn't even on the ice when it happened. If you asked Eddie what he was doing, which everyone did, he went tight-lipped. The short answer he gave, was he fell. And broke his arm.

And that was that.

He was out for the skating season. Then one season turned into another. And then he was eighteen, and for reasons unknown to the world, Eddie Kaspbrak's professional skating career was over.

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That fall, his mother decides to move back to Derry to be closer to her sisters. With no real plan and a great deal of manipulation on her part, he comes with her and enrolls in Derry Community College for the semester.

Living in Derry, Eddie quickly becomes bored.

Which is how he ends up, for the first time in almost two years, back at an ice rink.

The outer boards of the rink were heavily marked from being hit with

hockey pucks and lord knows what else, and as he walked down the rows of bleachers to the far end of the ice he was pretty sure he saw a gatorade bottle full of dip hidden under a seat. He was thankful his mother had gotten his skates sharpened before they moved, so that she would never, ever step foot in this hovel. But as soon as he walks in, Eddie is greeted with the familiar smell of artificial cold air and a tinge of old sweat, and there were a handful of skaters practicing their jumps or spins on the ice. The two large windows on the left that let in plenty of the late afternoon sunlight left potential soft spots on the ice, but it made the space feel slightly less like a concrete box like most rinks he frequented did.

Derry Ice Center was in serious need of a face lift, but it was still his first home.

Stepping onto the ice for the first time since he broke his arm was just as unremarkable as it was the other tens of thousands of times he had done it before. It was like walking into the front door of your house. Familiar, comfortable.

It'd been two years, and he knew he was rusty, but it still feels like he had never left.

He decided to take it relatively easy for this session, maybe attempt some single jumps if he felt up to it. For the most part, he just skated around, getting used to being on the ice again, using his muscles in a way that he hadn't in way too long.

After about twenty minutes of skating around, he felt like he was wasting his time and went to the middle to practice on some spins. As he came out of his sit spin, he noticed another figure skater watching him from the hockey box.

“Can I help you?” Eddie asks.

The other skater shakes her head, her red curls bouncing as she does.

“Nah, just watching. You new here? I haven’t seen you before.”

“My mom and I moved here from Boston a couple months ago, but I’m from here originally. I’m Eddie.” He stuck out a hand in greeting. The girl takes it firmly.

“I’m Beverly, but most people just call me Bev. Nice to meet ya Eddie. Have you skated long?” She looks at him with genuine interest. As far as Eddie can tell, she doesn’t know who he is.

“Oh yeah. Since I was little. How about you?” He pushes himself backwards and forwards on his skates, needing constant motion. Bev immediately picks up on this and pushes off, motioning for him to join her.

“I started when I was about ten? Then I started working here when I was sixteen and now I coach too. I just started because I loved that disney movie Ice Princess, now this is basically my whole life.”

Eddie’s eyes light up at the mention of the movie, “Wait, is that the one where the girl is like, super smart and her mom doesn’t want her to skate and she’s all like-”

“No mom, I’m giving up your dream!” They both say at the same

time before dissolving into giggles.

“I loved that movie when I was a kid. I secretly recorded it on a vhs tape to watch in my room.” Eddie says.

“It’s a classic! Truly life changing.” Bev pulls ahead to do a small turn, before bumping shoulders with Eddie.

“So, what else do you do besides skate?” She asks.

Even though its been years since he’s been skating, he still has to think for a second about the answer. “Oh um..I like comic books. I’m taking classes at Derry community. That’s pretty much it. What about you?”

“I can’t believe I haven’t seen you before! I wonder if you know any of the others. There’s a bunch of us that work here and go there too. Stan just left, but Bill and Ben should be around. Do you want to meet them?”

Eddie hesitates. He’s not actively trying to avoid meeting new people, but he did come here to skate, after all. Bev catches on to this, “Don’t worry, we can skate more and then I’ll introduce you. They’ll be here all day.” He smiles back at her, before skating ahead, ready to go back into his workout.

The two of them spend the next half hour practicing, Eddie skates around the rink as he watches Bev practice a routine out of the

corner of his eye. She catches his eye after she successfully lands a salchow, her eyebrows raised in a challenge.

He can't go for broke right now, but he's sure he could handle a single flip. He speeds up, looping around the rink a couple of times to psych himself up. Eddie sets himself up for the jump, and pulls himself up into it. He nearly falls, and his height is dismal compared to what he was able to do when he was younger, but he feels like a part of him is starting to click back into place. He turns to look at Bev, who gives him a thumbs up from where she's standing on the ice. He shoots one back at her, and starts back up to try again.

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"Do you want to try and fix that sink that got broken at our last game?"

"You mean the one that guy tried to beat Richie with? I think that's beyond our capabilities. Either way, I'm off the clock. So that's not my problem right now."

"I th-think D-Dave already ordered a new one, s-so the f-faucet's our new m-mascot."

After hearing this snippet of conversation from the three people in the pro-shop, Eddie would very much like to turn around and leave. But Bev is right behind him, almost pushing him inside the small, stuffy store.

“Hey guys! I want you to meet Eddie! He just moved here!” Bev announces loudly, causing the current conversation about a decapitated sink to pause.

“Hey, I’m Mike. I saw you skating out there, do you compete?” The guy standing in front of the counter says.

“Oh no, I don’t. What do you do?” Eddie decides to leave it at that, but he sees Mike look down and eye his skates, and back up at Eddie’s face with a quizzical look. So he can tell the skates are custom, and that Eddie is omitting something. Cool.

Mike keeps this observation to himself, *thank God*.

“I play hockey. Bill here is my D-partner.” He smiles over at the lanky boy folded into an office chair cradling a broken sink faucet.

“Nice t-to meet ya, Eddie!” Bill says, spinning himself around.

“Are you gonna introduce me to your friend there?” Eddie asks, pointing at the faucet.

Bill waves it in the air, “This,” he says, “Is our n-new mascot f-f-for the Derry Dancing Clowns....” He furrows his brows, “Stephen. Stephen the Sink.” He declares with finality.

“Sounds like you need a new team name then. Maybe the Derry

Dishwashers?” Eddie suggests. Bev leans over the counter to grab the newly christened Stephen, holding him up to the light.

“And after all that money I spent on that jersey too, a real shame. Derry Dishwashers has such a nice ring to it.”

“Our new logo can be a sink with angry eyes. We’re gonna be the coolest team in the league. Oh! I didn’t introduce myself. I’m Ben.” The other boy behind the counter says.

Bev hands the faucet to Ben, who puts it away under the counter.

“So Eddie, you like skating?”

“What kind of question is that, Ben? Did you see him out there? He was skating circles around me!”

“Hang on, I’m getting to something! Do you want to be able to skate for free?” Ben asks, hands steepled.

“I mean, yeah that would be nice.” It’s not like Eddie was planning on coming that often, but if its free then--

“Then you should work here! We need more people. It’s fun, and easy and-”

“I dunno, I have school and-”

Mike chimes in, “We all have school, the boss is super understanding. And the pays good, for what it is.”

Eddie looks between the four of them. There’s a part of him that’s reluctant to go back to his rink rat days, especially with how it ended for him last time.

But the other part of him misses it *so much*. Misses having a place to go that isn’t home, or school. Misses having friends who understand his quirks and put up with his particular routines. He does, he’ll admit, miss skating, really truly miss it. He’s never going to go back to his old life, but after today, he can’t just pretend that skating will just go away. It will always call him back home.

“Sure. Give me an application.”

Bev cheers as Bill reaches behind him to pull out a tiny packet for Eddie to fill out. He returns the next day to turn it into a very excited Bev.

“I’ll let Dave know and make sure he interviews you right away! Do you wanna skate now? You can if you want.”

“No, I’m good, I have to go to class. I’ll see you later though!”

“Before you go, let me get your number. For work purposes, of

course.” She says with a wink.

Bev texts him as soon as he leaves the rink,

Expect a call soon! <3

And just like that, by the end of the afternoon, he has an interview scheduled with the owner of the rink, Dave, for the next day. He’s never had a job, but he’s pretty sure it shouldn’t be this easy to get one.

Dave is the most confusing boss Eddie has ever met. Eddie imagined someone who looked like a stereotypical boss, dress shirt and tie. Instead he meets a middle aged man with shoulder length hair, a visor, and grease-stained arms. At least he dressed up with a polo shirt, Eddie thinks.

He asks Eddie about what kind of experience he has, they mostly talk about what he knows from basically living in rinks for the last 12 years of his life, and then asks him to fill out his availability with classes and during his school breaks. After, he takes Eddie to the pro-shop, and “introduces” Eddie to Ben and Mike.

“Boys, I’d like you to meet our newest employee. This is Eddie.”

“Eddie! That’s awesome! When do you start?” Mike asks. Both he and Ben are looking at him with huge grins on their faces. Eddie turns to Dave for an answer.

“He’ll start on Saturday. Richie’ll train him.”

2. Set the dance alight

Summary for the Chapter:

Richie and the rink: a history

Richie was one of the rare ice rink employees who *loved* the holiday season. Sure, it left him feeling overworked, exhausted, and by the end of it, so sick of christmas music he would consider using the end of a figure skate to burst his own eardrums.

But the holidays just hit different when you worked at Derry Ice Center. Even if he was working, it meant he was constantly surrounded by the people he cared about the most. He also got to wear dumb hats to work during normal business hours. He usually had to save those just for when he was scorekeeping. It was the *best*.

He started working at the rink almost three years ago, when he had just turned sixteen. A year prior, Bill had dragged him to the rink for a public session before one of his hockey games, and Richie, who was anti-exercise-that-didn't-involve-his-dick-or-a-rythym-game, was determined to do one lap, throw a snowball at Bill, and play on the ancient arcade games in the corner for the rest of the time.

And then he saw Jet.

This fucker, this wizard on skates, was straight up dancing. Not like figure skating dancing, but like doing the grapevine, standing on his toes, doing the moonwalk, in hockey skates. Richie was fascinated.

He teetered his way over to him, nearly falling on his ass twice, (Bill

insists it was three times, but it was only *twice* , he swears.)

“How the fuck do you that?” he asked, his voice echoing across the rink.

The guy laughs, and spins, his legs twisting up like a twizzler and unwinding again to face Richie, “You wanna learn?”

Richie just nods, dumbfounded. Why did no one tell him skating could be cool? Have all of his friends been hiding this from him the whole fucking time?

“Well first, you gotta be able to go forwards! You’re like a baby deer with broken ankles out there!”

“And how am I supposed to get better?”

“Have you ever seen a penguin walk?”

“I guess? What does-“

Richie’s train of thought rams into fifteen feet of snow when this guy he just met grabs his shoulders, and adjusts his stance,

“Feet shoulder length apart, bend your knees...good! You can use

your hands to grab your legs when you feel yourself start to fall. Now, March! Be a penguin!”

Richie feels like a child, and dumbly does what he is told. On shaky feet, he takes some steps and makes a slow, awkward attempt at skating around the rink, this guy, who finally introduces himself properly as they’re skating around, keeps encouraging him. Bill joins them too, holding richies hands to keep him steady and get a feel for going faster.

Okay, so it turns out skating is fun.

After that session, he makes a point of going at least once a week. At first, he always makes sure to drag along one of the other losers, and get them to teach him the basics. He starts going on his own soon enough though.

It turns out that Jet works at the rink when he’s not taking classes at the community college, and even lets him in for free sometimes.

“Hey, how old are you again?” Jet asks him one day. He’s showing him how to moonwalk, which has resulted with Richie falling a lot. His knees are probably bruised to hell but he is determined, god dammit.

“Uh. I’m fifteen. Why?” His answer makes Jet look disappointed and Richie’s stomach swoops. Richie always feels a warm kind of nervous around Jet, he really wants to impress him, and be his friend, and make him laugh because his

laugh is really nice, but it’s not weird, okay?

Okay maybe it's a little weird, but he keeps it well under wraps.

"Bummer. Well, when you're sixteen you should apply to work here! It's fun, half our job is like, skating, and flirting with girls." He punches Richie on the arm playfully. "Now try that moonwalk again."

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Richie applies a week after he turns sixteen. It's the tail end of the summer, so they need new people anyway.

He tries to hide his disappointment on his first day when he shows up and finds out Jet doesn't work there anymore.

His dumb little fantasy of a work place romance that obviously wouldn't happen, *get yourself together dumbass*, crumbles as his new boss says something rote about him not working there anymore. The guy is the whole reason he applied in the first place.

He sulks for a week but gets over it because it turns out working at the rink is fucking awesome.

Dave really likes him. And teaches him a lot. He's still a minor, so he's not legally allowed to work any of the heavy machinery, but Dave still explains how to sharpen skates, and lets him skate behind

to watch how the zam works. In a few years, if he keeps working hard, he'll be made a supervisor.

He's able to get the rest of the losers working there too, and between their shifts and his, he almost never leaves.

By the time school starts up again, he is a certified rink rat.

—

On Thursday he gets texts in the group chat, and from Dave within a few minutes of each other

Losers

Bennie: *new boy Eddie got the job!! we just talked to him with Dave*

Bevjamin: *he just texted me to let me know!!*

Stan the man: *who are you talking about*

Bevjamin: *a new figure skater! R u working sat? He'll be there*

Stan the man: *ooh. & No thank fuck lol*

Big Bill: *aww :(well miss u*

Stan the man: *you'll see me after for ur game, You big baby*

Richie : *what's this about a new boy?*

Bevjamin: *new boy!!!*

Bennie: *new boy!!!!*

Micycle: *new boy!!!*

Big Bill: *new boy!!!*

Stan the Man: *havent you heard Richie, there is a new boy.*

Another notification pops up as he's about to reply to Stan,

Dave Big Boss Man: *I have a new employee coming in on Saturday. Show him the ropes. Go easy on him pls don't*

Richie sends a quick ok to Dave, and spends the rest of the night messing in the group chat, and playing video games online with Stan. He doesn't think too much about the mysterious new boy.

He definitely isn't looking forward to Saturday, no, not at all. Why would he be.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm posting this from my phone because I really wanted to get it up! Sorry for any weird formatting or spelling errors, I'll fix it soon! I'll probably edit things anyway. Lol

Anyway! Follow me on twitter @jockwitch

Author's Note:

Thanks for reading! I'm on [twitter](#)!